

[Folk Customs]

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“There used to be an old tannery right down there over the edge of the hill,” Arthur pointed out the south window toward the village below. “Right about where that old hoss shoein’ shop stands now, and the folks from the farm used to go down there and set and set and set. It about drove the tanner out of his head to have ‘em round so much, so he took the sheepskin that was used for a seat on one o’ them cut out barrel chairs and he melted some boot wax. Oh, yes, they made boots there out o’ the hides they tanned, and then he put the boot wax on the sheepskin. The fust fellow that set there couldn’t git loose o’ the skin, an’ finally most of the inmates o’ the farm took a lesson and didn’t set so long. They all called it th’ Setters Seat.

“We used to go to the church then, too,” he continued. “We’d go in the morning and take a basket lunch and stay all day. Everybody and everybody’s sister was there. In between the mornin’ and the afternoon service folks was visitin’ and young ones runnin’ back and forth and everybody was ketchin’ up on the week’s news. It was some better ‘an the papers than we have now. ‘Tho of’ course we didn’t know so much about what was goin’ on outside. Folks got religion in them days and they kept it a goin’, too.

“For many a year old Mem (Remembrance) Smith walked to Haverhill Corner (N. H.) and back for the mail. He could neither read or write, but he was a smart feller for all of that. He would watch the postmaster put the mail up at the office and 2 he knew which name came where and could remember so as he never made a mistake when he got home. The wags would try to mix him up, but the mail got to the right person every time. After the master packed the mail into Mem’s bag, he set off for home, down across the medder to

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the bridge. In them days the bridge was toll and it was a cent for every foot crossin'. To save the cent in summer, Mem would take off his clothes, roll 'em up in a bundle and tie 'em with the mail on top of his head, and swim the river. In the winter he would cross on the ice."